

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 646

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STADIS EYES ONLY FOR ASST SECRETARY-DESIGNATE TODMANN FROM
AMB CRIMMINS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: OVIP, BR

SUBJ: POSSIBLE TRIP OF MRS. CARTER

REF: STATE 061202

1. BEFORE CARRYING OUT YOUR INSTRUCTIONS -- WHICH WOULD NOT BE
FEASIBLE OR DESIRABLE TODAY OR SUNDAY IN ANY CASE -- I WANT TO
PRESENT THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

A. A VISIT TO BRAZIL BY MRS. CARTER COULD HAVE DEFINITELY
POSITIVE EFFECTS AT A SOMEWHAT MORE DISTANT DATE THAN THE ONE
CURRENTLY CONTEMPLATED. FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE BEEN THINKING
THAT A VISIT TO BRAZIL ASSOCIATED WITH THE MID-MAY OPENING
OF THE SAO PAULO TRADE CENTER WOULD BE APPROPRIATE DEPENDING
ON THE EVOLUTION OF PENDING ISSUES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

B. THIS CONSIDERATION OF A FUTURE VISIT IS BASED ON THE
REASONABLE PROSPECTS, WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, FOR A HALT TO,
AND QUITE POSSIBLY A REVERSAL OF, THE DOWNWARD TREND AS THE GOB
CONTINUES TO PUT ITS AT LEAST SOMEWHAT ARTIFICIAL EMOTIONAL
BINGE ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT BEHIND IT, AS THE REAL AND
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MAJOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERNAL PROBLEMS PROGRESSIVELY
BECOME THE OBJECT OF BRAZILIAN PUBLIC ATTENTION, AND AS WE
DEMONSTRATE A CALM, BALANCED, UNRUFFLED BUSINESS-AS-USUAL
ATTITUDE TOWARD BRAZIL. THIS IS THE APPROACH THAT THE EMBASSY
IS RECOMMENDING IN THE FINAL PART OF OUR RECENT SERIES OF TELE-
GRAMS, WHICH WILL BE IN WASHINGTON ON MONDAY. WE RECOGNIZE THAT
THE DIFFERENCES ON THE NUCLEAR ISSUE AND USG DECISIONS ON TRADE

CAN UPSET THESE PROSPECTS FOR GRADUAL RETURN TO NORMALITY, BUT THAT DANGER WILL BE PRESENT BETWEEN NOW AND MID-APRIL, PERHAPS EVEN MORE ACUTELY BECAUSE OF THE TIMING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL DECISION ON SHOES.

C. WE (THE DC., THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR, AND I) BELIEVE THAT A PROPOSAL FOR A MID-APRIL VISIT WOULD RUN THE SERIOUS RISK OF DISSERVING THE INTENDED GOOD-WILL PURPOSE, FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

--THE GOB AND BRAZILIAN ELITES IN GENERAL ARE NOT OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT FIRST LADIES AS SUBSTANTIVE SURROGATES FOR PRESIDENTS. THIS ATTITUDE WAS EVIDENT EVEN IN THE PURELY CEREMONIAL PRESENCE OF MRS. NIXON AT THE GEISEL INAUGURATION IN MARCH 1975. GIVEN THIS BRAZILIAN BIAS, WE THINK THAT IT IS CERTAINLY POSSIBLE THAT THE GOB WOULD LOOK UPON A MORE SUBSTANTIVE VISIT BY MRS. CARTER AS CONDESCENDING, COSMETIC SECOND OR THIRD CLASS TREATMENT, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE PRESIDENT'S OWN KNOWN OR POSSIBLE TRAVEL PLANS (ESPECIALLY MEXICO).

-- THIS GENERAL MENTAL SET WOULD PROBABLY BE REINFORCED BY THE TENDENCY -- NOT UNIFORM BUT PREDOMINANT -- TO READ THE VISIT AS A LACK OF APPRECIATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BRAZIL AND THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN US. IN THE MORE BITTERLY ANTI-CARTER SECTORS OF THE GOB (THE HARD-LINE MILITARY, ESPECIALLY), THE

VISIT MIGHT EVEN BE READ AS AN AFFRONT OR AS AN ATTEMPT TO GO OVER THE HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT TO THE PEOPLE TO WEAKEN "NATIONAL UNITY" OR SAP "NATIONAL WILL."

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-- THE GOB MIGHT WELL BE EMBARRASSED TO RECEIVE THE WIFE OF THE MAN WHO HAS EMOTIONALLY BEEN MADE -- WITHOUT THE GOB'S HAVING LIFTED A FINGER TO COUNTERACT THE PROCESS -- A PERSONAL OBJECT OF WIDESPREAD AND PUBLIC ATTACK.

-- BECAUSE THE VISIT WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BEFORE TIME AND SECOND THOUGHTS BY THE GOB ABOUT THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL LONGER-TERM WISDOM OF ITS EMOTIONALISM HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO WORK THEIR EFFECTS, WE FEAR THAT THE GOB, DESPITE OUR DESIRE FOR OFFICIAL CONTACT, MIGHT GIVE MRS. CARTER THE STRICTLY "WOMAN" TREATMENT, I.E., TEA WITH MRS. GEISEL, VISITS TO CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS, LIMITED ACCESS TO THE MEDIA, ETC. MRS. RABIN WAS HANDLED THIS WAY FOR POLITICAL REASONS.

-- MRS. CARTER WOULD BE FACED BY AN AGGRESSIVE, PROVOCATIVE PRESS (TO THE EXTENT THAT THE GOB PERMITTED ACCESS).

D. DESPITE THESE ESTIMATED INMOST GOB REACTIONS, WE BELIEVE

THAT THE CHANCES ARE CONSIDERABLY BETTER THAN EVEN THAT, ONCE WE ENGAGED SILVEIRA, THE GOB WOULD AGREE, UNENTHUSIASTICALLY AND COOLY, TO THE VISIT. (OUR ESTIMATE THAT THERE IS ABOUT A 20 PERCENT CHANCE OF A POLITE REFUSAL TAKES INTO ACCOUNT NOT ONLY THE ABOVE FACTORS BUT ALSO THE DISTINCT FRIGIDITY, BORDERING ON DISCOURTESY, IN THE GOB'S RESPONSES TO PRESIDENT FORD'S INVITATION TO GEISEL TO VISIT THE US.) THE GOB'S ACCEPTANCE WOULD BE MOTIVATED BY BASIC GOOD MANNERS, BUT, MUCH MORE IMPORTANT, IT WOULD ARISE FROM THE CONCERN, WE JUDGE, THAT REBUFF OF THE VISIT WOULD BE VIEWED AS A DIRECT AND CONSCIOUS ACT OF INJURY TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE USG.

E. IN OUR OPINION, THERE ARE AVAILABLE TO US, UNTIL THE CLIMATE FOR MRS. CARTER'S VISIT IS PROPITIOUS, OTHER MORE CONCRETE, LESS AMBIVALENT, LESS RISKY MEANS OF DEMONSTRATING OUR CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE RELATIONSHIP. (SEE FINAL SECTION OF OUR THREE-PART SERIES.)

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F. WE WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT, DESPITE THE POOR AUGURIES, WE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE THE APPROACH IF MRS. CARTER'S ITINERARY WERE TO TAKE HER ANYWHERE IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF SOUTH AMERICA. FOR HER TO VISIT PERU, FOR EXAMPLE, AND NOT TO HAVE GIVEN THE GOB AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE HER WOULD TAKE ON IN THE GOB'S MIND, THE CHARACTER OF A DELIBERATE US DESIRE TO SNUB BRAZIL. THEREFORE, IT WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT FOR ME TO KNOW WHERE ELSE SHE MAY BE GOING.

G. THIS PICTURE MAY BECOME CLEARER WHEN THE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES SILVEIRA'S REPLY TO THE SECRETARY'S LAST LETTER AND ALL OF US HAVE A CHANCE TO EVALUATE ITS CONTENT AND TONE.

2. FOR ALL THE FOREGOING REASONS, I COUNSEL AGAINST RAISING THE MATTER WITH SILVEIRA UNTIL YOU HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO WEIGH THE MATTER FURTHER. I REPEAT THAT I BELIEVE THAT, ONCE THE POSSIBILITY IS RAISED WITH SILVEIRA, THE DIE IS CAST.
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